1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

The spirits may come to the neighborhood of human habitations in their anthropomorphic form and try to seduce Indians of the opposite sex, and abnormal children will be the result of this intimacy. Monstrosities among the animal and vegetable world are also held to be spirits. Just like snakes, these spirits are said to have a great passion for women at the menstrual periods.

CONNECTION OF SPIRITS WITH THE SILK-COTTON TREE.—The silk-cotton tree (M.: *sisin;* T., P.: *panya;* U.: *paniki*) is said to be the abode of the spirits of the departed, and no one ventures under it during the night. It must not be cut down, as by such an act the spirits would be robbed of their favorite resting place, and they would not fail to revenge themselves. Should it be absolutely necessary, however, to cut down a silk-cotton tree, the wrath of the spirits may be avoided by burying something at the foot of the tree in the shape of an offering, as food, red peppers, money, etc. When the tree has been felled, the object in question may be recovered. On Rio Lacus, a southern affluent of Rio Coco, a Sumu used for this purpose two small dolls or puppets (M.: *yapti;* S.: *ditalna*), which he had obtained from the sukya. This procedure, which savors of African origin, is the only case of this sort which I have met among the Sumu, but the habit in question is common enough among the Miskito.

The Indians also claim that a dugout made from the silk-cotton tree will groan continually during the night, and that at the same time it will travel with tremendous speed. A similar plaintive sound is said to be emitted during the dark by mattresses or pillows stuffed with the down adhering to the seeds of the tree. For the above-named reasons the credulous Indians make no use whatever of the haunted tree.

The Creoles and the West Indian Negroes dread this tree even more than do the Indians; according to them the spirit of the deceased, which they call "shadow" or "duppy," leaves the grave on the third day after death in order to roam about the woods, especially around the ceiba or silk-cotton trees. Some believe that these superstitions concerning the tree may have been taken from the Africans; still, the Maya of Yucatan and the Quiché of Guatemala, who have had practically no intercourse with Negroes, hold beliefs regarding the silk-cotton tree similar to those of the Miskito and Sumu.

CREATION OF MAN.—As stated above, the Miskito confound Thunder (*Alwani*) and God (*Wan-Aisa, Dawan*) sometimes with one another, and both of these supernatural beings are looked upon as the creator of man and the world in general. The Sumu, however, consider the Sun-god (*Uhubapat*) as the Almighty God and Creator of everything, and in former days are supposed to have worshiped him.